



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

July 31, 2002

Dear School Administrator:

As we work to ensure the Federal *No Child Left Behind Act* provides a complement to our efforts directed toward improved student achievement, we are reviewing MSIP, MAP and other initiatives. It is clear the change to annual testing of students in grades 3-8 will require greater specificity of grade-level curriculum, instructional alignment and testing.

In response to that need, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will work with committees of educators to identify specific grade-level objectives for each core content area. These objectives will serve as a blueprint of specifications to aid in creating new grade-level tests. The objectives will be aligned to the Show-Me Standards and Curriculum Frameworks and reflect current research and best practices in specific content areas. We anticipate the grade-level objectives to be ready for release in the spring of 2003.

Many districts have already developed exemplary curriculum models and made significant progress in student performance. Districts that have made major gains in curriculum work should find the objectives provide confirmation of their work. For other districts, these objectives may provide more specific guidance to local efforts. As we move toward the next phase of MSIP, we believe the grade-level objectives and, ultimately, a state-model curriculum to be developed around the objectives will greatly assist districts. Local staff may elect to use these resources as they desire. The goal is to afford more staff time for development of learning activities and materials directed toward high student performance.

Because of these changes, we are revising the curriculum review section of MSIP. **Effective September 1, 2002, districts that “Met” the Curriculum Standard in their Second Cycle review will be automatically awarded “Met” and two points under Third Cycle accreditation consideration.** The MSIP review team will not examine curriculum during the onsite review unless requested by the district. The only curriculum documentation required will be a written response to 6.1.3 regarding equity, technology, research and workplace readiness. Districts with this status will need to locally determine curriculum development needs appropriate to support continued improvement in student achievement. Districts may request to have curriculum reviewed for comments as part of the MSIP visit. If an optional curriculum review is the preference of the district, requests for that review should be made in writing to the Director of the Missouri School Improvement Program by September 15 of the MSIP review year.

Districts that did not meet the Curriculum Standard in their Second Cycle review will have curriculum reviewed as part of their Third Cycle team visit. Districts with this status will need to demonstrate they have "Met" curriculum standards as outlined below:

- Two (2) points will be awarded to districts with curriculum meeting Second Cycle Standards. Districts will need to show documentation that curriculum has been reviewed during the past five years and satisfy the other indicators of Standard 6.1 at an acceptable level.
- Districts with curriculum that does not meet Second Cycle Standards will receive zero (0) points and documented concerns.

During Second Cycle, vocational education curriculum was reviewed under the vocational standards. Districts that "Met" the vocational education curriculum (Indicator 8.3b) in their Second Cycle review will be considered "Met" during their Third Cycle review. Districts that did not meet the vocational education curriculum standard in their Second Cycle will have all vocational education curriculum (Standard 7.3) reviewed as part of their Third Cycle team visit. All new vocational education programs approved since the Second Cycle review will be reviewed during the Third Cycle team visit.

We hope these changes will assist districts in best prioritizing efforts to improve student achievement. If you have questions about these topics, please contact Dr. Sharon Schattgen, Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment (573-751-4608); Jack Brumley, Coordinator of School Improvement and Accreditation (573-751-4426); or Dennis Harden, Coordinator for Vocational-Technical Education (573-751-3500).

Sincerely,

Bert Schulte